

Landing Of French Cable In Days In Entire 300 Years

CABLE,
FRENCH
ATLANTIC

One Of First Messages To Emperor Napoleon

*Now Owned By Western Union
Telegraph Company*

Citizens Of Duxbury Helped Pull Cable Ashore

One of the greatest days in the entire three centuries of Duxbury history was July 23, 1869, when a fleet of cable ships which had laid the cable from Brest, France, to St. Pierre, Miquelon, arrived off the shore of Duxbury. This raised the curtain for Duxbury's role in cable history and to the present day it has continued in that role, playing an important part in the cable system of the Western Union Telegraph Company.

Preparations were made immediately to land the shore end of the cable, which the ships had laid from St. Pierre to its terminus in Massachusetts. As the sailors of the cable ship Chiltern brought the end of the cable slowly to the beach, there were cheers from hundreds of citizens who had gathered on shore and who grasped the cable and aided the sailors to pull the cable up the beach to the cable house.

MESSAGE TO NAPOLEON

An artillery salute was fired by

the cable ships and amid the cheering of the crowd, messages were sent over the first direct cable to Emperor Napoleon and other dignitaries in France. On the following Tuesday, July 27th, an official celebration was held in which a crowd of some four or five thousand people participated. There were flags and streamers, triumphal arches and other decorations throughout Duxbury. Artillery was fired at intervals, the brass band led the procession to the crest of Abraham's Hill overlooking the beach where plates were laid for six hundred guests. At the banquet, such distinguished speakers as Sir James Anderson, Mayor N. B. Shurtleff of Boston, Lord Cecil, Thomas Russell, Collector of the Port of Boston, and Geo. O. Brastow, President of the Massachusetts Senate, were present.

The cable was laid by the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company using the Chiltern,

1869 One Of Of Duxbury's Greatest History

S.S. Great Eastern and the crew which had laid the first permanently successful Atlantic cable in 1866, and other cable ships. The cable was laid for the French Atlantic Cable Company over an all French route since the islands of Miquelon were, and are, French possessions.

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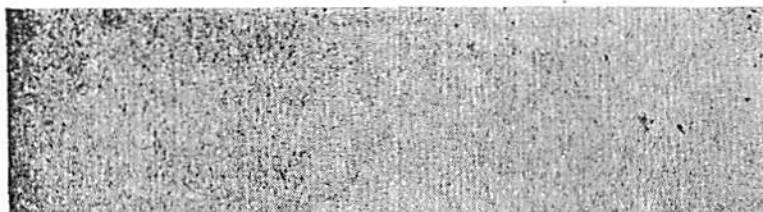
As the company laying the 1866 Atlantic Cable had exclusive landing rights for twenty years and the French Cable Company did not have power from Congress to maintain a cable on the shores of the United States a charter was granted by the Massachusetts legislature

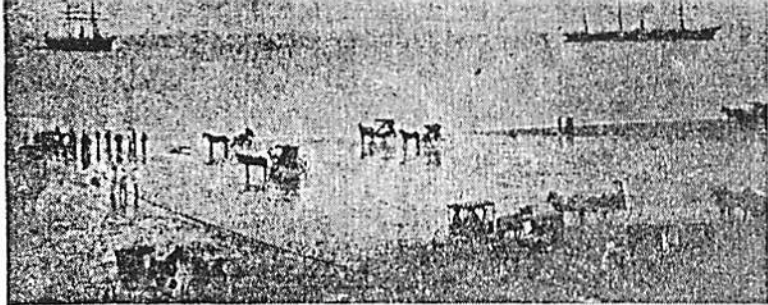
Atlantic Telegraph Company, and another, the Atlantic Telegraph Company.

ABANDONED

The St. Pierre-Brest section of the 1869 cable, 2,685 nautical miles in length, was abandoned about 1898 because the expense of keeping it in repair was excessively high. Its construction was identical with that of the 1866 cable and the 1865 cable, which was retrieved from the bottom of the ocean and completed in 1866.

The St. Pierre-Duxbury section, about 750 nautical miles in length, was however, retained in use and is used to the present day by the





The Landing of the Cable. Print from book "The Landing of the French Atlantic Cable," published in July 1869.

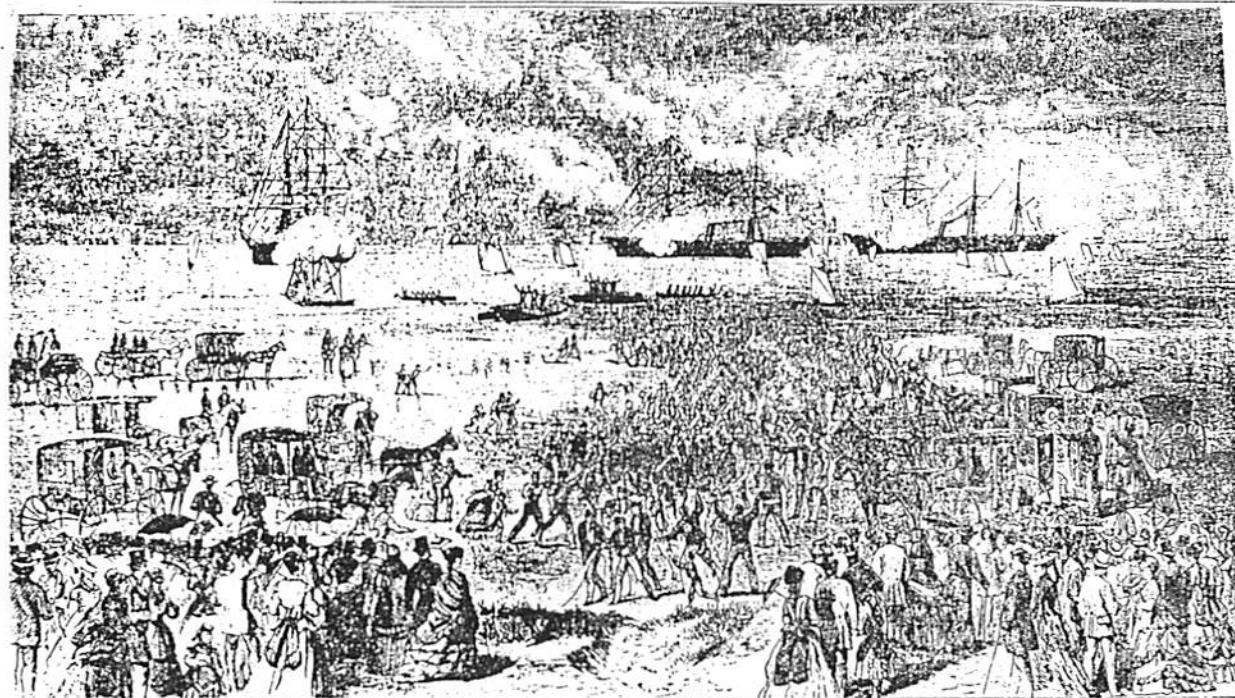
to the Ocean Telegraph Company which had control of the cable from the shore to a point outside the jurisdiction of the United States.

The cable was backed by British financiers despite its French name and the landing concession granted by the French Government. It furnished genuine competition only for about two months, when these and other British financiers of cables, arranged to pool their resources. The 1869 cable remained a part of this pool until 1873, in which year the Anglo American Telegraph Company absorbed the French At-

Western Union Telegraph Company, although about 75% of the original cable has been replaced. Western Union obtained possession of the St. Pierre-Duxbury cable in 1911, when it leased all of the cables of the Anglo American Telegraph Company for a period of 99 years.

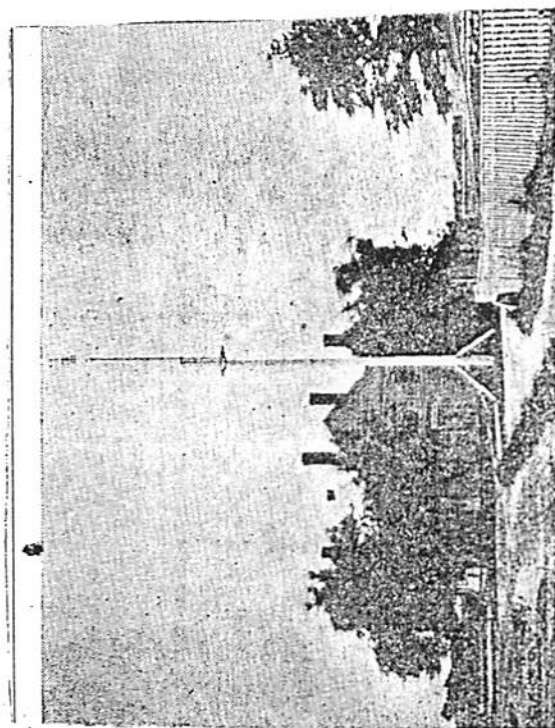
The St. Pierre-Duxbury cable is used today as a valuable link in feeding traffic from New York or Boston into Western Union's transatlantic cables terminating in Newfoundland. To facilitate the handling of traffic and increase the speed of operation, the St. Pierre-

Duxbury cable was cut by a Western Union cable ship just off Canso, Nova Scotia, in 1922, and the two ends were brought into that station. In this way, the cable was divided into two sections known as the Duxbury-Canso and the Canso-St. Pierre sections.



THE FRENCH ATLANTIC CABLE—THE LANDING OF THE SHORE END ON THE BEACH NEAR DUXBURY, MASS., JULY 28th—THE SALUTE BY THE CABLE FLEET.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST. 1869.

Above plate appears in official history book "The Story of Duxbury Massachusetts 1637-1937" published and copyrighted by Duxbury Tercentenary Committee.



Old Bank Building. Terminus of Telegraph in Duxbury. Print from book "The Landing of the French Atlantic Cable," published in July 1869.